NEWS ANALYSIS 1-1142 JULY 22, 1976
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PRESS FREEDOM AND "DEVELOPMENTAL JOURNALISM"

ANNCR: NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN SEES SERIOUS QUESTIONS RAISED BY TWO RECENT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AS TO THE FUTURE OF PRESS FREEDOM -- PARTICULARLY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

VOICE: IN NEW DELHI EARLIER THIS MONTH FIFTY-EIGHT DEVELOPING NATIONS AGREED TO FORM A POOL OF THEIR NEWS AGENCIES, MOST OF THEM GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR CONTROLLED. A DRAFT CONVENTION TO BE SUBMITTED TO NEXT MONTH'S NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE IN SRI LANKA WOULD HAVE THE POOL TRANSMIT OFFICIAL VERSIONS OF THE NEWS OCCURRING IN EACH MEMBER COUNTRY. THE POOL WOULD SUPPLEMENT, OR PERHAPS EVEN SUPPLANT, THE COVERAGE GIVEN THOSE EVENTS BY INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES.

IN SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, THE UNESCO (U.N.EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION) CONFERENCE ON COMMUNICATIONS HAS ENDORSED A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR PROJECT, BUT ON A WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND NOT AS RESTRICTIVE A BASIS. BOTH PROJECTS RAISE A SERIES OF QUESTIONS AND SOME CONCERN AMONG JOURNALISTS. MANY OF THEM CONCEDE THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR SUPPLEMENTAL NEWS SERVICES REFLECTING EVENTS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. AND BASICALLY, JOURNALISTS BELIEVE THAT ANYTHING THAT PROMOTES AND INCREASES THE FLOW OF NEWS AROUND THE WORLD IS TO BE WELCOMED. IT IS A FACT OF JOURNALISTIC LIFE THAT NO NEWS AGENCY OR GROUP OF THEM CAN COVER ALL THE NEWS ALL THE TIME. THERE IS NO DOUBT SOME JUSTIFICATION FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD'S COMPLAINT THAT TOO OFTEN THE INTERNATIONAL WIRE SERVICES CONCENTRATE ON THE SENSATIONAL IF NEGATIVE NEWS EMANATING FROM A GIVEN COUNTRY AND NEGLECT OTHER, MORE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS. OTHER OBSERVERS -- AND THEY ARE NOT JUST FROM THE DEVELOPING

WORLD -- POINT OUT THAT ANY NATION HAS A RIGHT TO IMPROVE NEWS HANDLING AND, THUS THE FLOW OF INFORMATION TO OTHER COUNTRIES.

BUT HAVING SAID ALL THAT, THERE STILL IS WORRY ABOUT A REGIONAL NEWS DISSEMINATION SYSTEM THAT, IN EFFECT, WOULD RESTRICT THE FLOW OF NEWS FROM PRIVATE SOURCES. IT IS THIS ASPECT THAT IS GENERATING CONCERN AMONG JOURNALISTS AROUND THE WORLD AS THEY CONSIDER THE NEW DELHI AND SAN JOSE PROPOSALS. EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT GOVERNMENTS ARE NOTORIOUSLY EAGER TO KEEP THEIR SHORTCOMINGS HIDDEN AND TO INTERPRET, SOMETIMES TO THE POINT OF DISTORTION, THEIR OWN ACTIONS IN THE MOST FAVORABLE LIGHT.

ONE OF THE MISSIONS OF ANY FREE PRESS IS TO EXAMINE SUCH GOVERNMENT-INSPIRED NEWS AND TO DETERMINE THE UNDERLYING FACTS. IT IS IN THE EXECUTION OF THAT JOB THAT A FREE PRESS IN ITSELF IS A PROTECTION FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD. FOR ONLY IF IT FUNCTIONS FREELY CAN IT EXPOSE ABUSES OF POWER AND CORRUPTION WHICH IN THEMSELVES RETARD -- IF THEY DO NOT WRECK -- PROGRESS IN DEVELOPMENT.

(OPT) IT IS THESE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT NOT ONLY BY THE NATIONS WHICH ATTENDED THE UNESCO MEETING IN COSTA RICA, BUT THOSE IN AFRICA AND ASIA THAT EVENTUALLY MAY HOLD SIMILAR MEETINGS ON A UNESCO-SPONSORED WORLD POLICY ON WHAT THEY CALL "DEVELOPMENTAL JOURNALISM." AS TO THE NEW DELHI PROJECT, THE MISGIVINGS IT AROUSES ARE MORE JUSTIFIED. FOR AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE DECISION THERE WERE SUCH EXAMPLES OF GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED JOURNALISM AS REPRESENTATIVES FROM NORTH KOREA, AND VIETNAM. AND THE MEETING WAS HELD IN THE CAPITAL OF INDIA -- A COUNTRY THAT RECENTLY HAS IMPOSED LIMITATIONS ON

THE FREE FLOW OF NEWS TO ITS CITIZENS AND THE REST OF THE WORLD.

(END OPT)

IN SUM, IF THE NEW DELHI AND SAN JOSE DECISIONS ARE IMPLEMENTED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO INCREASE THE FREE FLOW OF NEWS AROUND THE WORLD, THEY WILL BE WELCOMED. IF NOT, THEY WILL BE DEPLORED.

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